



## Information for Forest Plan Scopes

### 1. What is a Forest Plan?

A Forest Plan is a document which draws together all the relevant management information for a forest and describes the management proposals. Normally the plan contains a vision for twenty years and more detailed information for the first ten. Usually, a Forest Plan will be prepared in advance of major operations such as the first timber felling and the main purpose is often to outline the proposed felling pattern and the replanting of the forest. Felling and replanting affords the Forest Manger an opportunity to redesign the forest to meet modern forest industry standards. This might include increasing woodland diversity for wildlife, improving streamside design for water quality or improving the landscape design. The Forest Plan is normally put forward for 'Approval' by the Scottish Forestry, Forestry Commission (in England), Natural Resources Wales, or Forest Service Northern Ireland, whichever is the appropriate body responsible for licencing any tree felling. They will then issue a Felling Licence or Permission to the forest owner.

### 2. What is scoping?

Other people and organisations may hold relevant information about the forest such as the location of archaeological features, water supplies or rare or protected species which should be safeguarded during forest operations. Alternatively, there may be concerns about potential impacts of forest operations and their effects on neighbouring properties and local people. Scoping is intended to assist the Forest Manger in the preparation of the Forest Plan by bringing these issues to the surface at an early stage so that they can be discussed with the relevant party. It may not always be possible to fully resolve every issue but usually some mitigation measures or agreement can be reached. Scoping is also intended to establish a permanent channel of communication between the Forest Manager and those with a legitimate interest in the forest to ensure that any issues which may arise in the future can be resolved.

### 3. Why have I been asked to comment?

Although it may be difficult to identify everyone and every organisation who may wish to comment, the Forest Manger will try to be as inclusive as possible in the scoping process. We will endeavour to engage with a wide range of individuals and organisations during the scoping process. We have identified you or your organisation as potential stakeholders and have included you in the list of scopes. We will remove your or your organisation's details from the list if you wish. There is no requirement for scopes to respond if they do not wish to do so.

### 4. How will my comments be treated?

Comments received from scopes will normally be recorded in the issues log and included in the Scoping Report which draws together and analyses all the comments and information received. A copy of the Scoping Report is made available to anyone who requests it. If you wish to receive a copy of the Scoping Report, then please indicate this with your response. To comply with GDPR and to protect other specially protected information, any comments or information which can identify an individual or a protected feature will be redacted before being made publicly available. However, comments and information provided will be attributed to the type of individual or organisation providing the information in the Scoping Report. For example, a neighbour's comments may be cited as 'Neighbour 1'. Personal or other confidential details will only be made known by Scottish Woodlands to relevant statutory authorities who are required to review this information.



## **5. How do I access the scoping information?**

Scoping information is made available through the Scottish Woodlands website by following the web link and using the password provided in the scoping letter. The information is downloadable as a series of Adobe pdf files. If you prefer, or if you cannot or have difficulty in accessing the internet, the Forest Manager will send to you a copy of the scoping information through the post. If you wish to receive a paper copy of the scoping information, then please contact the manager using the information provided in the scoping letter.

## **6. What does the scoping information contain?**

The scoping information will contain a note of the period over which scoping is to take place and a brief description of the woodland being scoped. We will normally include a “Concept Map” which outlines our initial thoughts on the management of the forest over the period of the plan together with any information we already hold on aspects of the woodland for example water supplies, important habitats, wildlife sites (where these are not considered sensitive locations), proposed timber haulage routes and an indication of major operations proposed and design improvements. At this stage the information will be quite high level as we will not begin the detailed design process until the scoping period has been completed.

## **7. How do I comment?**

We are happy to receive comments in any format you wish. Email and postal details are included in the scoping information. If there is a particular issue which is better to discuss on site, then the Forest Manager will try to meet you there in person.

## **8. When do I need to comment by?**

UK Woodland Assurance Standard requires a 30-day consultation period. This period is set to ensure that the Forest Plan can continue to make progress within a reasonable timescale. We would therefore appreciate if comments could be made within the requested period. The consultation dates are given in the scoping letter. The end of the 30-day scoping period is not however the end of all consultation. Some issues may require ongoing investigation and discussion but by raising the issue now, even if you are not able to provide a detailed response within the allotted timescale, then we are at least aware that further consultation will be required. Scoping is intended first and foremost to highlight significant issues not necessarily to fully resolve them.

It may be better for more detailed discussions to take place just prior to operations commencing in a particular area, which could be some years hence. By establishing contact at scoping, we can communicate with the right people at the right time.

If some important and relevant information comes to light at any time in the future, then the Forest Manager would be grateful to receive it.

## **9. What happens after scoping is over?**

After the scoping period is over, we will review all the comments we have received and consider potential measures to resolve or at least mitigate as far as reasonably possible any problems that have been raised. We cannot promise to fully satisfy all concerns, but we will work with respondents to try and find the most satisfactory and amicable solution for both sides. Often scoping responses enable us to improve our proposed plan using helpful information gleaned from scopes.



## **10. What about Forest Certification?**

We prepare our Forest Plans to conform to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard which is the forest certification standard in the UK by which responsible and sustainable forest management is assessed. On completion and approval of the Forest Plan the intention is for the forest to be assessed for membership of Scottish Woodlands Forest Certification Group Scheme. Membership provides assurance that the forest is being managed to meet the highest internationally recognised standards. Our Group Scheme is independently audited each year to ensure we maintain our standards and UKWAS compliance.

## **11. Why do we need to cut down the trees?**

The UK is less than 20% self-sufficient in timber and we import around 32 million tonnes of timber and timber products from forests around the world each year. As the second largest timber importer in the world, only behind China, the UK has a large international timber footprint on the planet. As such securing a domestic strategic reserve, which can supply the local markets, will be essential to continued infrastructure and development growth in this sector. This will in turn support the local timber and construction industry, providing future jobs in the area.

The trees were planted as part of a timber crop which has now reached maturity and they are ready to be harvested and taken to a modern sawmill where they will be processed into a wide variety of timber products. There is almost no waste from the harvested logs as even the small diameter timber and sawdust can be used in products like MDF and chipboard. This locks up the carbon that the trees have absorbed reducing the effects of climate change and reducing our dependence on imports.

If the trees are left unharvested then, due to our windy climate the likelihood is that they will blow over, so we are planning now on how to carefully harvest the crop before that becomes a critical issue. We will try to spread the harvesting out in short phases over a period of at least 20 years to reduce the pace of change and local impacts.

## **12. Will the forest be replanted?**

Yes, the forest plan will show how the forest is to be regenerated. We will take this opportunity to diversify the forest structure and species range in line with the requirements in UKWAS and good silvicultural practice.

In order to establish the young trees, we will normally carry out ground preparation to provide a planting site and we will tend the trees to protect them from browsing animals, weeds and pests.

Pesticides are only used as part of an Integrated Pest Management approach including an Environmental and Social Risk Assessment process. We aim to have the young trees fully established and able to look after themselves within five years of felling.

## **13. What about wildlife and important habitats?**

Productive forests provide a home for many protected species including most major birds of prey, otter, red squirrel, bats, badgers, pine marten, water voles, and wildcat. Many other species, most obviously deer, use the forest as well. The forest plan will identify any important habitats and describe how they will be managed to protect and where practicable enhance them.

Before any major operation begins, we will carry out a wildlife survey to try and identify any important wildlife sites in the area which might be affected by our operations. As far as practicable we will aim to minimise any negative effects but timber harvesting inevitably involves change. Where necessary we will prepare species protection plans and obtain any licences required.



You can help us during the scoping process by providing us with any information you may have on important species within the forest. We will not disclose sensitive information on protected species other than to appropriate authorities.